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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/877,181	06/11/2001	Carie J. Wimberly	BS00-049	1233

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WITHERS & KEYS FOR BELL SOUTH  
P. O. BOX 71355  
MARIETTA, GA 30007-1355

EXAMINER
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ARAQUE JR, GERARDO

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3629

SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
3 MONTHS	04/19/2007	PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 09/877,181	<b>Applicant(s)</b> WIMBERLY ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Gerardo Araque Jr.	<b>Art Unit</b> 3629	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 January 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)          | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Specification*

1. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. **Claims 2 – 20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Voss (US Patent 5,758,341)** in view of **Ross (US PGPub 2001/0042080 A1)**.

4. In regards to **claims 2, 8, 14, and 16**, **Voss** discloses a method for automating error processing and correction in legacy usage and billing systems comprising:

storing the plurality of defective records in the master database, the plurality of defective billing records having error codes (**Column 4 Lines 55 – 62**);

applying one or more sets of error processing rules to the plurality of defective billing records to correct the billing records in accordance with error codes that are defined (**Column 3 lines 26 – 31**);

sending a warning when a defective billing record is encountered by the one or more error processing rules that has an undefined error code (**Column 5 Lines 49 – 56; Column 7 Lines 31 – 35**); and

However, **Voss** fails to disclose:

receiving a plurality of defective billing records containing raw usage data sent from a plurality of client computer sites, each having legacy usage and billing systems, at a centralized server site including a master database;

sending corrected billing records from the centralized server to the client computer sites that sent the defective billing records for further processing.

**Ross** discloses a similar system in which billing records are processed and checked for errors. Ross also discloses that in order to receive the appropriate level of payment reimbursement, the proper medical billing codes must be assigned to the services rendered by the health care provider (**Page 1 ¶ 9**). Consequently, it is also obviously included that the system would be receiving a plurality of defective billing records from a plurality of client computer sites since it is obvious for health care providers to contain various medical records within a master database. Ross specifically discloses that the system that can be used in various fields that need a documentation system and method, which would obviously require some type of error processing (**Page 4 ¶ 54**). Further still, Ross also discloses that the system prompts the user with the option to view the location of any possible mistakes, which is an essential aspect when attempting to identify the appropriate level of payment reimbursement

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**(Pate 1 ¶ 9).** Moreover, it is also obviously included that the corrected forms would then be sent back to the user/site that required the error processing to be done.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify **Voss** in view of the teachings of **Ross** to have a system that also receives a plurality of defective bills from a plurality of client computer sites as well as sending the corrected billing records to the client sites since the automated system would result in cost savings, avoiding incomplete billing that would result in inappropriate payment reimbursement, as well as checking the completeness of all data and information entered into the system.

5. In regard to **claims 3 – 4, 9 – 10, and 20, the combination of Voss and Ross** fails to explicitly disclose wherein the processing rule includes a description of the rule, a rule start date, a rule end date, and a rule maximum rule duration, as well as, a processing rules is manually extended, modified, deleted and copied into a new rule.

However, **Voss** does disclose the system is programmed with a set of procedures or logical analysis steps and later performs actions required by the outcome of the logical analysis to validate or correct the data on the mainframe (**Column 3 Lines 27 – 31**). One skilled in the art of programming would have found it obvious that programming rules to include a description of a rule, its start date, end date and duration since technology and rules/laws are constantly being changed and updated. For instance, tax laws are always being modified and a programmer who is creating tax software, such as Turbo Tax, would have found it obvious to program into the software various rules to take into account such changes. The same would hold true for a

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system that is processing billing records. If the bill is on some type of payment plan that is varying from month to month the system must take this into account in order properly reflect the appropriate changes. Moreover, a description of such rules must also be included in the event that the bill is ever to be questioned.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention that the error processing and correction system disclosed by the combination of Voss and Ross would obviously require to have to have the programmed rules to include parameters such as a start date, end date, and maximum duration in order to take into account various changes that may be made later on regarding billing procedures.

6. In regard to **claims 5, 11, and 17, the combination of Voss and Ross** fails discloses wherein a warning is sent when a predetermined threshold is met limiting the total number of records received from the billing systems.

However, it is old and well known that computer systems, especially those that are performing analysis procedures, to have a predetermined threshold. For example, **Voss** discloses that the system performs one transaction at a time while performing various actions under the one transaction. As a result, the system would be unable to perform more than one transaction at a time since it would result in lower quality, accuracy and consistency. Although, **Voss and Ross** do not disclose that the a warning is sent when the threshold is met, **Voss and Ross** to disclose that the system is capable of sending warning when it is confronted with an unknown error and would then prompt for assistance (**Voss Column 5 Lines 49 – 56; Ross Page 1 ¶ 12**).

Moreover, it is also old and well know for operating systems, such as Windows, to prompt a warning message when the system is being overwhelmed. One such example would be when a system is reaching a low level of memory and the user is attempting to run more programs than the system is currently able to handle.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the combination of **Voss and Ross** to include a warning system when the system has reached a predetermined threshold in order to avoid a system crash or having the system produce lower quality, accuracy, and consistency in its work.

7. In regard to **claims 6, 12, and 18**, **Voss** discloses wherein the processing rules are applied to individual errors and to classes of errors in a batch process (**Column 3 Lines 26 – 36; Column 4 Lines 58 – 62**).

8. In regard to **claims 7, 13, and 19**, **Ross** discloses balancing volume flows of defective billing records and sending a warning when an out of balance condition exists (**obviously included in that Ross discloses a system for appropriately processing appropriate payment reimbursement for services rendered [Page 1 ¶ 9]**).

9. In regards to **claim 15**, **the combination of Voss and Ross** disclose a user function that provides a graphical user interface and wherein the user function presents the categorized billing records for an administrative review via the graphical user interface (**obviously included since both Voss and Ross both disclose that the system prompts the user with a warning in the event that the system encounters**

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**an error, which would later result in user interacting with the system to correct the error)**

***Response to Arguments***

10. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 2 – 20 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

11. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gerardo Araque Jr. whose telephone number is (571)272-3747. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 8:30AM - 4:00PM.

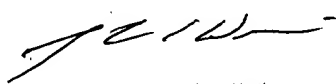


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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Weiss can be reached on (571) 272-6812. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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